

May 18, 2010

To: Robert Bowden  
Colts Neck Township Administrator

From: Jim Schatzle  
Colts Neck Deputy Mayor

Re: Public Comments on Local School Budget and Regional School Budget

I am out of State and unable to attend this special meeting of the Township Committee May 19, 2010. Relative to the local school board budget, I would like to acknowledge the work of Committeeman Engel, Committeeman Eastman, former Mayor Benjamin Forester, former School Board President David Kostka, Administrator Bowden, Deputy Clerk Kara, the Colts Neck School Administration and Board of Education members along with the citizens that have attended our meetings and shared their points of view.

With that said, I understand the sub-committees involved with the local school board budget have come to a budget number acceptable to both parties. I also understand this agreement will increase the Local School Tax by one penny, which is the same increase as the Municipal Tax this year. I think this is an exceptional number considering we faced a large loss in State aid, and the overall economic situation the Town and school are facing this year, and it maintains a high quality of education for Colts Neck children. I support the resolution being read tonight.

On the Regional side, Mayor Florek and Committeeman Fitzgerald, and I agree on the \$2.65 million reduction recommended by Superintendent Wasser. We believe this accomplishes two goals: 1) zero percentage tax increase to Colts Neck residents for their Regional School Tax, and 2) maintains the educational quality of the High Schools. I support the resolution being read tonight.

With the budget process coming to an acceptable conclusion, I believe the result would have been much better off for this year and perhaps even better for future years if Union members would have accepted a pay freeze, as many of their peers did in the State of NJ. I also know that Colts Neck Township Department Heads and non-union employees are getting a zero percent raise this year and that our Police union is still considering concessions to assist with the budget and their Department. As I have stated several times, I believe the unions held the answer to significantly reducing the devastating effect of the loss in aid from Trenton, thus keeping several positions from being eliminated.

Having attended the Colts Neck Schools, they do and always will hold a special place in my Life. I want, as does everyone that has worked on this budget, nothing less than excellence from our school system and know that together we will continue toward that goal.

**"What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child."** --George Bernard Shaw